

page breaks in the formatted document apparently caused two blank pages when the specification was printed out on a different printer than the original printer. These page breaks have now been removed, restoring the 11-page specification.

In ¶¶ 3-8 of the Office Action, the examiner rejected claims 3, 4, 8-10, and 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In response to this rejection, claims 3, 4, 8 and 18 have been amended to cure the deficiencies identified by the Examiner.

In ¶ 10 of the Office Action, the examiner rejected claims 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,211,481 to Tilman. The Applicants will treat this rejection as if applied to the claims as amended above.

Amended independent claims 1, 11 and 21 each substantially recite that the wings of the female structure are sloped to guide the male member or profile toward the opening or center plane of the female structure when the male member or profile impinges on either wing during movement toward the female structure. In contrast, the wings of the hooks 40 and 42 of Tilman are sloped so that an impinging male member would be guided away from the center plane of the female structure. Thus, none of claims 1, 11 and 21 (and claims dependent thereon) are anticipated by Tilman.

Amended independent claims 8 and 18 each substantially recite that the female structure has T-shaped

sides with respective guide surfaces that have a distance from the base, from which the female structure projects, that increases with increasing distance from a center plane of the female structure. In contrast, the "guide surfaces" of the hooks 40 and 42 of Tilman are sloped so that the distance from the wall 14 decreases with increasing distance from a center plane of the female structure. Thus, neither claim 8 nor claim 18 (nor claims dependent thereon) are anticipated by Tilman.

Finally, amended independent claim 22 substantially recites that the female structure presents a target width (i.e., distance between the peaks of the two sides of the female structure) that is equal to or greater than the zipper height. In contrast, the distance between the peaks of the two hooks 40 and 42 in Figure 2 of Tilman is obviously much less than the height of the zipper. In fact, it is even less than the length of the male profile 20. Thus, claim 22 (as well as claim 23 dependent thereon) is not anticipated by Tilman.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant submits that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims 1-23 are hereby requested.